

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants again note that the Examiner has not indicated consideration of the two (2) sheets of drawings filed on August 7, 2003. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner acknowledge receipt and consideration of these drawings in the next Office Action.

The Examiner has recommended inserting a space between the numbers and the units in the pending claims for better readability and clarity. Applicants thank the Examiner for this recommendation and, in accordance with the same, have amended claims 1-5, 7-10 and 12-13 to address this issue.

Claims 1-13 are all the claims pending in the application. Applicants note that the Examiner has withdrawn the prior rejection under § 103(a). However, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-13 based on new grounds. In particular, claims 1-3, 6-8 and 11-13 stand rejected under § 102(a) or § 102(e) as being anticipated by Nakamikawa U.S. App. No. 2003/0143432 A1 (hereinafter “the ‘432 reference”). In addition, claims 4-5 and 9-10 stand rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘432 reference in view of Nishikawa U.S. App. No. 2002/0034028 A1 (hereinafter “the ‘028 reference”). For the following reasons, Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Applicants note the Examiner’s observation that the ‘432 reference can be overcome by the submission of a certified translation of Applicants’ priority document, thereby perfecting Applicants’ claim to priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d). As such, Applicants submit herewith a sworn translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-236647 (JP ‘647), the priority

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document for the present application. The filing date of JP '647 is August 14, 2002.

Accordingly, Applicants' priority date antedates the '432 reference. That is, the effective date of the '432 reference is its July 31, 2003 U.S. filing date. Therefore, submission of the English translation of JP '647 removes the '432 reference from the prior art. Therefore, Applicants submit that the present invention is not anticipated by the '432 reference, and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

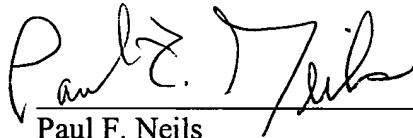
Similarly, the remaining § 103(a) rejection of claims 4-5 and 9-10 rely upon the '432 reference in combination with the '028 reference. As noted above, the '432 reference is not available as prior art against this application. As such, the '028 reference itself does not support the § 103(a) rejection. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-13 are allowable.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul F. Neils", is written over a horizontal line.

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